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ABSTRACT

Two studies investigated the use of curriculum advisory committees by North Carolina community colleges. The first, by George Armfield of Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, surveyed community college administrators and faculty about their use of these committees. The study: (1) identified 16 major functions of curriculum advisory committees ranging from offering advice on program development to providing awards to outstanding students; (2) identified problems involving infrequent meetings, confusion about the groups' objectives, problems of attendance, and failure to recognize the groups' contributions and to implement the groups' recommendations; (3) determined that the qualities of the committee members, such as relevant experience, enthusiasm, and availability, had a great impact on the effectiveness of the committee; (4) determined that variables including length of appointment, size of committee, member orientation, elections, and recognition of committee members' service had little effect on committee effectiveness; and (5) suggested that the effective utilization of curriculum advisory committees requires a clear set of objectives and the selection of knowledgeable and interested committee members. The results of Armfield's study are strongly supported by a study by Dr. Harley Affeldt at Forsyth Technical Institute, which also found that involvement of the members, college support, and implementation of committee recommendations are necessary for committee functioning. Tables showing results from Armfield's study are appended. (KL)

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM TWO RECENT STUDIES ON THE USE OF CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUPS IN THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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THE USE OF CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUPS
IN THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

In a study entitled, "A Descriptive Study of Curriculum Advisory Committees in Local North Carolina Community Colleges: Their Organization, Practices, and Functions," Dr. George W. Armfield, Vice President for Administration of Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, questioned Community College administrators and faculty about their use of these committees. The study identified sixteen major functions of curriculum advisory committees. These functions, which ranged from offering advice on program development to providing awards to outstanding students, are listed in priority order in Appendix A.

An examination of the utilization and effectiveness of these committees found some problems involving infrequent meetings, confusion about the groups' objectives, problems of attendance, failure to recognize the groups' contributions, and failure to implement the groups' recommendations. Slightly less than 80% of the respondents in the study reported that their institution accepted and took action on at least one recommendation of their most effective advisory committee.[1]

One of the more important features of this study was an examination to determine what variables make a difference in the effectiveness of these committees. It was found that the qualities of the people who serve on the committee had the highest relationship to the effectiveness of the committee. The selection criteria which most contributed to the successful performance of major advisory committee functions were:

1. Relevant experience of the member in vocational education,

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[1]George W. Armfield, "A Study of Local North Carolina Community College Vocational Curriculum Advisory Committees: Their Organization, Practices, and Functions," Doctoral Dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, 1981, p.122.

2. Enthusiasm for the institution and its programs,

3. Availability of time to attend meetings.[2]

Some organizational variables, such as having written minutes of meetings and having a schedule of meetings were found to be substantially related to the effectiveness of the committee, but many others were not. Those things which had little effect on the effectiveness of the committee included:

1. The length of term to which members were appointed,

2. The size of the committee,

3. Orientation or the lack of this in training for members,

4. Election of officers, and

5. Recognition of committee members service.[3]

This study and its findings suggest that effective utilization of curriculum advisory committees require a clear set of objectives and the selection of knowledgeable and interested people to serve on these committees. It also requires the commitment of the institution or program to the use of advisory committees and an interest in this type of input.

The results of Dr. Armfield's study are strongly supported by the finding of another recent study by Dr. Harley P. Affeldt, Dean of Engineering Technologies at Forsyth Technical Institute, in which the variables that contribute to successful curriculum advisory committees were also examined. This study also found that involvement of the members, the support of the school administration and staff, and the implementation of committee recommendations are necessary for these groups to function.[4]

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[2] Ibid., p. 154.

[3] Ibid., pp. 172-173.

[4] Harley P. Affeldt, "The Development of a Rationale and Guidelines for Effective Utilization of Advisory Committees in the North Carolina Community College System, Doctoral Dissertation, Nova University, March, 1981.

APPENDIX A

Major Functions of
Community College Curriculum Advisory Committee
Listed in Priority Order

1. Offered advice on course and program development.
2. Recommended course and program revisions which kept the curriculum relevant.
3. Recommended equipment for use in the vocational program.
4. Assisted in the formulation of goals and objectives for the vocational program.
5. Encouraged local public support for the vocational program.
6. Assisted in evaluation of the vocational program.
7. Assisted graduates in securing employment.
8. Assisted in recruiting students for admission to courses and programs.
9. Assisted in long range plans related to the vocational program.
10. Advised on the construction of new facilities and/or renovations of present facilities.
11. Assisted in recruiting faculty.
12. Provided consumable supplies for classrooms and shops.
13. Provided scholarships or other financial aid for students.
14. Evaluated the work and effectiveness of the curriculum advisory committee.
15. Advised in planning vocational needs for the disadvantaged and handicapped students.
16. Provided awards to outstanding students and/or faculty.

* from "A Study of Local North Carolina Community College Vocational Curriculum Advisory Committees: Their Organization, Practices, and Functions," by George W. Armfield, pp. 116-117.

APPENDIX B

DEGREE OF RELATIONSHIP OF MAJOR COMMITTEE FUNCTION TO OPERATIONAL CRITERIA

CRITERIA

FUNCTIONS	Utilization / Number of years worked with Advisory Committee	Satisfaction with Utilization	Selection / Policy Statement on Selection of Members	When Committee Members were selected (Before or after Program was started)	Relevant Experience of Members in Voc. Ed.	Enthusiasm for the Institution and Programs	Availability of Time to Attend Meetings	Organizational / Schedule of Advisory Committee Meetings	Written Minutes of Meetings	Constitution and Bylaws Available for Committee	Plan recognition of Committee Members	Evaluation of Work of the Committee	Guidelines for Organizing an Advisory Committee	Budget Available for Advisory Committee	Attendance of Committee Members to Meetings
1. Offered advice on course and program development.		36%		45%	70%	30%	48%	50%							35%
2. Recommended program revisions which kept the curriculum relevant.				32%	60%	48%									40%
3. Assisted in the formulation of goals and objectives for the program.		33%			69%										49%
4. Recommended equipment for use in the vocational program.		60%		36%	40%	51%									51%
5. Assisted graduates in securing employment.			49%		52%	81%	71%		42%				33%		30%
6. Advised on facility construction and on facility renovations.			48%	65%	79%	30%	68%		33%	47%				37%	32%
7. Assisted in long range plans related to the vocational program.	52%				57%	55%	40%				32%				
8. Assisted in the evaluation of the vocational program.					57%	39%	38%	38%	43%						
9. Encouraged local public support for the vocational program.					72%	47%	44%								30%
10. Assisted in recruiting students for admission to courses and programs.	39%		33%		55%	57%	52%					33%			

*Relationship below 30% not shown.
**Degree of relationship based on Phi or Cramer's V statistic.

From "A Study of Local North Carolina Community College Vocational Curriculum Advisory Committees: Their Organization, Practices, and Functions," by George W. Armfield, pp. 155-169.

Annotated Bibliography of Recent Studies
of Citizen Advisory Groups in Community Colleges

Armfield, George W. A Descriptive Study of Curriculum Advisory Committees in Local North Carolina Community Colleges: Their Organization, Practices, and Functions

Published: July, 1981

Purpose: To examine curriculum advisory committees in the Community Colleges and determine what things differentiate effective from ineffective committees.

Locations: 57 of the State's 58 Community Colleges.

Participant: At each institution (a) the person responsible for the advisory committee in the institution (usually the Dean), (b) a division chairman, and (c) a faculty member were questioned about their experience with their best curriculum advisory committee.

Statistics: Chi Square, Phi, Cramer's V

Results:
1. Descriptions of 16 major functions of curriculum advisory committees.
2. Identification of things which do (and those which do not) make a difference in the effectiveness of these committees in performing their functions.

Affeldt, Harley P. The Development of a Rationale and Guidelines for Effective Utilization of Advisory Committees in the North Carolina Community College System

Published: March, 1981

Purpose: To study the use of the advisory committee in the Community Colleges and to develop guidelines for effective utilization of the advisory committee.

Locations: A geographic sampling of 25 of North Carolina's Community Colleges and Technical Institutes.

Participant: The President of each of these institutions responded to a nine page questionnaire on the use of advisory committees in his institution.

Statistics: Descriptive statistics were used; i.e., frequency counts and percentages.

Results:
1. Identification of various factors to be considered in developing an advisory committee.
2. Development of guidelines for utilizing advisory committees.

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